



Morris J. Berman Grounding and Oil Spill San Juan, Puerto Rico

Proposed Projects to Restore Lost Recreational Beach Use

Beach Injuries and Lost Recreational Use

Approximately 169 miles of coastal shoreline along the northern coast of Puerto Rico were closed or adversely affected for three months during the height of the 1994 winter tourist season. Approximately 103 miles of ocean shorelines and 66 miles of bay shorelines were oiled. These natural shorelines, which are used for recreation and habitat, contain a mix of rock, sand, and pocket gravel beaches, and anthropogenic features such as seawalls, rip-rap, bridges, and other structures.



Cleanup Crews at Work on the Beach

The area affected by the spill is an internationally recognized tourist destination. Miles of recreationally important beaches were oiled, affecting tourists and residents who use the beaches. The presence of oil and cleanup activities precluded swimming, sunbathing, and other beach recreation. Other recreational activities, such as recreational boating and sport fishing, were also impaired as a result of the oiling.

The injury to recreational beaches and their lost use was documented to be three-fold: (1) beach closings and lost use of the beaches, (2) a diminished quality of those beach visits taken during and after the spill response, and (3) increased costs associated with those visits taken.

Proposed Beach Restoration Projects

Of the \$9,688,563 settlement received, \$2,273,063 is available for projects to address lost beach use. After evaluating a number of alternatives, the Trustees' propose a project to acquire lands for conservation purposes to best address lost recreational beach use.



Cleanup of Oiled Areas

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Acquisition of Lands for Conservation

Acquisition of Lands for Conservation as a restoration alternative encompasses the acquisition of one or more parcels or interests in land which include or border recreational shorelines affected by the spill (see graphic). Ownership and/or future use of such lands is placed in the public domain, thereby expanding and preserving public access to or opportunities for use of shorelines, for such activities as beach recreation, fishing, and nature viewing, in the area where these resource services were lost due to the spill. Acquired lands would be managed by local, municipality or Commonwealth authorities, as appropriate.



Likely Acquisition Area

The Acquisition of Lands for Conservation project would involve acquiring coastal habitats that provide comparable, similar services to the lost recreational beach use. At this time, the Trustees are only able to discuss an acquisition strategy and the relative types of project benefits and features without revealing project locations or describing details because of the sensitivity of the potential land transaction process and due diligence activities.

Public Comment on the Proposed Projects

The Trustees encourage comments from the Public on this project, as well as any other projects that the Public may identify to address lost beach use.

For Additional Information

Those who want more information about potential projects should refer to the Draft Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment prepared by the Trustees, which can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/berman/>. Hard copies are available by calling 787-729-6777 or writing San Juan National Historic Site, 501 Norzagaray Street, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901